1: Burrows--31 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 283 Ifalik

"Coconuts are husked in the way usual in tropical Pacific islands. A stake of hard wood, some 2 1/2 feet long, is pointed at both ends. One end is driven into the ground. The coconut, held with one hand at each end, is jammed against the other end of the stake where the point protrudes, and the husk pried off in strips.

This supplies another useful product. A piece of coconut husk makes a scrubbing brush for a bath. It serves as a napkin to wipe off the fingers after a meal. Dry coconut husks are important as fuel. One of them will hold fire until time for the next smoke, or while carrying borrowed fire from one house to another. Thin slices of coconut husk, with its rather spongy texture, are laid between the planks of a canoe before they are gummed and lashed together. They expand when wet, and keep the seams tight.

Charcoal from burnt coconut husks is mixed with coral lime to make the putty or mortar used to seal the holes in a canoe hull where the lashing runs through.

Short lengths of a crude kind of rope are twisted out of raw coconut husk fiber. They make wicks (atoliēf) to preserve fire. Such a wick is commonly kept alight during a sea voyage."

"The principal use of coconut husks is to supply fiber--sennit--for cordage. Preparation of sennit (gos) is women's work. The husks are first soaked in fresh water to soften them, and dissolve some of the matter that holds the fibers together. If there are no natural pools about, as there are on the borders of the taro swamp on Falālap, artificial water-holes, called libwaligos, are dug and walled with blocks of coral. Men may do the work, but the finished pools are tabu to men. If a man goes into one, he will catch no fish for 20 days afterward, and will get sick if he even tries, --so they say.

When the fibers are sufficiently loosened, a woman takes them to the shore and sits in the shallow water with a short log or projecting coral head in front of her. This she uses as an anvil, laying the softened husks on it and beating them with a stick until the fibers separate. During the process she repeatedly dips them in the water and shakes them about to remove all but the fibers. Finally she takes these ashore and spreads them [32] in the sun to dry. They now form a light, fluffy mass.

From this point men take over. Making rope is the light work they carry about with them to sociable gatherings, as a woman may take her knitting in our culture. They make rope by the hour as they sit with their friends in the canoe houses. It does not interfere with talking or smoking.

The fibers are carefully picked over until they all lie parallel. Little tufts of them are pulled out and twisted, with one hand at each end, into single strands [KS: native word omitted] two or three feet long. When enough of these are on hand, they are rolled

together between palm and thigh--most often on the right, but sometimes on the left--into two-strand cord.

This cord can be made as long as desired. Its thickness, too, can be varied. The smallest is called golgaulIk. What seems to be the commonest size, about 1/8" to 3/16" in diameter, is golgol. A larger two-strand cord, about 3/8" in diameter, is geref. A third strand may be added to this by another rolling on the thigh; it is then called garotel. Stouter ropes, in order of increasing size, are taani, taliou rIk, and taliounap. Hawsers (tennap) are made of three strands of rope. In laying these, one man holds the finished end, and three others, each holding one strand, do a sort of maypole dance at the working end. When a piece a few feet long has been laid, it is slung over a beam, and the man holding the finished end leans back, using his weight to tighten it. On the other end the three holding separate strands do the same, ensuring a tightly-laid hawser.

Sennit cordage has an indefinite variety of uses. One of the most important is that of fastening together the timbers of canoes and houses, where it replaces the nails of our culture. Quite literally it accompanies the people of Ifalik from the cradle to the grave, for their cradles are strung with the cord, which forms bedsprings, and hung up by it; while enormous lengths of rope, brought by all the men as a last tribute, form the outer wrapping of a body when it is taken to sea for burial.

Another important use of sennit cordage is for making fishing nets. Light cotton

netting, used for dip-nets and a few light seines, is bought ready-made from abroad; but large seines (ating) 5 or 6 feet wide and up to 200 feet long, are made of golgol.

Leaves of coconut have many uses. With their leaflets plaited together in various ways, they make thatch for the roofs of houses, screens for the walls, and sitting mats for the floors. (These are described in some detail in the section on house-building, p. 46.)"

1: Burrows--112 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 283, 422, 462 Ifalik

"Rope made by the men follows exactly the same pattern. It is often made for immediate consumption, and readily given. If we were wrapping up a package for shipment, we had only to ask whoever was in the near-by canoe-house, saying what size we wanted and how long, and he would immediately make it for us, no matter how many coils might be hanging in the canoe-house ready for use. These were the property of their makers, to be used as they saw fit, and were never taken by others. But if rope were needed for any more or less communal use--lashing for a large canoe, or for the timbers of the canoe-house, or line for a seine, --every man of the community concerned would feel an obligation to contribute. I did not hear of shirking such an obligation, but have no doubt that if such a case came to the attention of a chief, he would order the man to give rope or make it. And every male relative or neighbor contributed rope after a death, to be wrapped about the body."

1: Burrows--115 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 283, 565, 461 Ifalik

"Rope-making is work for mature man; just why is not certain. There may be more than one factor involved. For one, the preparation of fiber, which is women's work, is laborious. This limits the supply, and the seniority of the older men may give them first claim to what there is. Another possibility is that this slow, steady work may appeal more to middle-aged men than to the more vigorous, comparatively restless youngsters. Still a third factor may be the ascription of a certain dignity to rope twisting, which makes it a more appropriate occupation for grave and reverend seniors than for upstart youths. Such an association between the manufacture of sennit cordage and high status has been established in Samoa. Tø Rangi Hiroa (Samoan Material Culture, p. 248) calls it 'a chiefly custom' there and adds: 'The status of the occupation was recognized by terming the braiding materials a chief's staff.' (The fact that the technique there is braiding rather than twisting seems irrelevant.) In Ifalik the connection is at most less explicit. If rank is indeed attributed to the occupation, it is the rank of all mature males, whether chiefs or commoners."

1: Burrows--181-182 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 462, 784, 283 Ifalik

"The artificial pools of fresh water in which coconut husks are soaked to loosen the fibers in preparation for making sinnet are taboo to men. These pools, (called lip wa li gos) are dug among coconut groves, always at some distance from a dwelling. The work of digging them and walling them with blocks of coral may be done by men, or by men and women together. The final use of the fibers prepared partly in them--that of twisting cordage--is exclusively men's work. But the soaking of the husks is strictly women's work, and men may not enter the pools, once they fill up with water. If a man violates this taboo, he will be unable [182] to catch fish for 20 days; and if he tries to, will fall sick."

2: Damm et al.--169 [3] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 283 Faraulep

Coconut strings (mútś) were made in the customary manner; they were soaked in salt water - ni péli góth, then in fresh water - thúmu, dried - igapál, beaten (thús) with a heavy wooden beater (péreix), and finally twisted - xóloxól. Coconut thread - tarikít, rope - tát.

Hibiscus strings (gilifói) for fish lines are made in the same way as on Polowat.

4: Kramer--72 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 283 Lamotrek

Rope Making.

The hand movement in twisting is a continuous change of up and down, with the right hand (gel) and the left hand golemong (mong--left). The gologol [VMM: twisted cord] elastic; a bunch of three loops called vóngalima is used to catch the float that is detached from the boat. The cord has a thickness of 3 millimeters. The native term for cord strand is mut, roll Hellwig 2108 baidjórro...

The golomong is a rope twisted from four strands that are turned to the left and is used for rigging; it is twisted by an up and down movement of the hand. The rope is called pelitél.

Rope spinner Hellwig 2140 5920 waitilidja from Elato, 2297 6067 bait; thus the first word is to be broken down into bait ili djo "twister for the ripe nut"; it was not used on Truk but on Póloat (Figure 44 [VMM: see source]); Hellwig 2297 6067 shows the bait and its parts: stick--kalaniál, transverse beam--paile, of wood--nga, bamboo tube--ngat, knob at lower end--korodjol (Hellwig).

4: Krämer--72-76 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
283 Elato

[VMM: For a discussion of rope making and preparation of fibers, see Lamotrek, 4: Kramer 72, 75-76.]

4: Krämer--246 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 283 Woleai

Rope making is known, The strand is known as gologól and the ball as gassegül lü gologól. Fráme, méil, as on Lamotrek Figure 44, [VMM: see sourse].

Kotzebue Entdeckungsreise...III, page 62: rope, tal; thread, kologol.

28: Spiro--33 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 462, 283, 556 Ifalik

"The one ubiquitous activity engaged in by the men is the making of rope. Rope is indispensable for it is the universal fastener. In the absence of nails every object that requires the adhesion of parts requires the use of rope. But rope has other uses as well. One of the important objects used in Ifaluk's inter-atoll trade is rope. Rope forms part of the tribute that Ifaluk pays to Yap. And finally, when a person dies, his corpse is wrapped in an almost fantastically copius amount of rope. Rope, functions both as a crucial element in the subsistence economy, as well as an important factor in the prestige economy, since it is a sign of wealth. A man with little rope is looked down upon. Every man, then, desires to accumulate as much rope as possible, and spends the major part of his productive energies in its manufacture."

28: Spiro--33-34
116, 592, 345, 283

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Rope is made in the canoe-houses, these most important social and economic structures. Objectively viewed, there is little, if any reason, why the canoe-house should be the locale of its manufacture. It would be just as convenient to manufacture it in the home, except that there seems to be an aversion for doing any work in the house. For that matter the house is actually used for sleeping and conversational purposes only, since the cooking is done in the malum, and the people eat [34] outside, except in the case of rain. So that despite the desire for rope, a man will never make it in his house, though his evenings could very well be taken up by its manufacture. There is no taboo on the performance of economic activity in the house; it just is not so used."

28: Spiro--34 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1
116, 345, 283, 461, 156 Ifalik

"A factor of major importance in the use of the canoe-house for the manufacture of rope is its function as a social as well as economic center. Since the destruction of the men's club houses in the last typhoon the canoe-houses have taken over their function, so that the men now congregate in the canoe-houses as formerly they congregated in the club-houses. Now this fact is important for an understanding of Ifaluk culture. Though there is a word for work in the Ifaluk vocabulary (engan), it refers to discrete and specific forms of labor, and is not used as a generic term, as it is in our own culture, as when a man says he is 'going to work.' No one has his special work to perform each day, from which he rests at the end of the day or the end of the week. So, too, there is neither a term nor a concept corresponding to our word economics. Our conceptualization of life activities into economic, social, recreational, etc, does not hold for the Ifaluk. This means that the various kinds of work (engan) that are performed are recognised as responses to certain basic survival needs, but the concept of work as vocation or as moral career that this term has assumed in western society, at least in its Puritan and Calvinist tradition, is completely foreign to the natives, and indeed would be inexplicable to them. Theoretical considerations aside, this means that a man's day is his own, to do with what he desires, and among the activities he engages in, are certain activities of economic importance. A man goes to his club-house in the morning

because there he will be with the other men, where he can discuss the events of the day, engage someone in a conversation, and at the same time, make rope, if he so desires. But there is nothing compulsive about his rope-making, or for that matter, about any economic activity. There is no concept of an economic obligation, 'this ought to be done', except insofar as it relates to basic biological needs, and then 'ought' has no place at all, for it is obvious that if a man wishes to eat, he must fish etc."

28: Spiro--34 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 283 Ifalik

"The manufacture of rope is simple, (1) and readily lends itself to conversation and conviviality. Rope is made from the coconut sennet. The coconut husk is allowed to seep in stagnant ponds--this is the women's task--until the fibres are loose, after which the women take it from the pond, separate the fibres, beat them soft with a wooden board, remove dirt and other grime, and then let them dry in the sun. The men store the sennet in baskets, until such time as they wish to use it. They manufacture the rope, by twisting the individual fibres, which they draw with great agility from a bunch held in the crook of their thigh and leg, while sitting, into cord, twisting it on the thigh. This is the basic process from which ropes of any size can be made, from thin cord, to very thick rope that could well be used as mooring rope, on a ship. The completed rope is either taken home, where it hangs from the rafters of the house, or is allowed to remain in the canoe-house, each man having his own peg, with the assurance that no one will abscond with it."

"1. Simple, if you know how. I tried a number of times, but with little success, for the twisting of the fibres requires an agility, and a motor set, that only comes from practice."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

and then pace directly toward him. Don would sight on Tony (or me on arrival) to get the direction, and I would call back the paces so that Don could draw directly on the base map.

The main trail of Falarik, which I got in the habit of calling "the broad highway," or sometimes "el camino real," ran through the coconut grove parallel to the lagoon shore, generally twenty or thirty yards in from the water. It was about two yards wide, and neatly marked on each side by a row of moss-covered coral rocks. This broad highway ran between the Fan Nap and the lagoon, and passed directly in front of five of the big canoe houses that faced the lagoon along the Falarik shore. The sixth canoe house on Falarik was away from the trail on the point of land that jutted toward Falalap. There were also two canoe houses on Falalap, one facing the lagoon, and the other facing the pass between the two islands.

The canoe houses, clearly distinguishable on the aerial photographs, were convenient reference points in mapping. They served not only for the storage of canoes, nets, lines and other gear, but also as social centers for the men of the atoll. Groups gathered there to talk, or rest, or weave nets, or carry on the never-ending job of making twine or rope from sennit, coconut fiber. A big sea-going canoe was being built in the Falepenach canoe house, near the Fan Nap, during the summer of 1953. This provided me with a convenient and continuing subject for photography.

The broad highway ran for almost a mile along the lagoon shore of Falarik, extending considerably beyond the last habitation, toward the north end of the island, ending abruptly in the middle of nowhere. This northern tip of the island, beyond the end of the trail, was a wild tangle of vegetation, relatively little visited and little used. Except for this northwest tip, the whole of the lagoon margin of the island was a park-like coconut grove, kept clear of weeds or shrubs with almost no other kind of tree—only an occasional breadfruit tree near the household areas, and a few other things like the big *Barringtonia* by the Sabolap canoe house.

The entire course of the broad highway was thus through the open coconut grove. The habitations were mostly set at some distance back from the highway, near the "boondock line."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

Polynesian cultures, had almost endless ways of catching fish. Individuals or small groups fished with spears or with hook and line. A method that appealed to me particularly was to attach the hook and line to a kite, which was sailed from a canoe in the lagoon: thus combining the pleasures of fishing with those of kite-flying (one of the numerous instances where I couldn't decide whether a particular operation should be called "work" or "play"). There were also a variety of ways of trapping fish, with traps ranging from the large, permanent stone weirs built along the lagoon shore, down through various types of wattle traps, to improvised affairs of plaited coconut leaf sometimes set by the women in the shallows—the only fishing operation of the women, aside from collecting crabs, shellfish and the like. Women, in fact, were subject to various sorts of taboos in relation to fishing, and sex was strictly suppressed during a prolonged fishing operation.

There were various ways of catching special fish, like tuna, bonito and flying fish, when these appeared, but I didn't get to see any of these operations. Later in the summer, however, Don and I did spend a very active day trying to get a complete photographic record of a lagoon seining operation—the kind of fishing called yating.

The Ifalukians had an immense supply of seines—great piles stored in each of the canoe houses. The accumulation of seines and of rope seemed a direct consequence of the almost compulsive male habit of making sennit twine. Whenever a group of men were sitting around gossiping, or helping us gather information, or quietly watching the horizon, some of them would pull handfuls of fluffy leached and pounded coconut fibers out of their purses, and start twisting them into twine. This process, like knitting with the women of the West, did not interfere with either conversation or thought; and since it went on constantly, the twine output was considerable. The sennit twine had a great many different uses, but much of it ended woven into seines.

In the case of the particular yating operation that we photographed, the morning started with groups of men shouldering lengths of seine and carrying them down from the canoe houses to load them into canoes beached on the lagoon shore. The canoes took off in orderly procession, each dumping its seine in turn and connecting with the next until there must have been nearly a mile of seine forming a great